

The First Presidency

From the Journal of Andrew Fjeld

The idea of reorganizing the First Presidency did not enter the minds of the leading brethren at the time of the martyrdom of the prophet Joseph nor for a long time afterward. The Apostles were sure that their Quorum was equal in authority to the First Presidency as indicated in Sec. 107, verse 24, and hence could preside over the Church.

When Brigham Young was returning to Winter Quarters after leading the original company of Pioneers to the Valley, he mentioned the idea to some of the brethren.

Wilford Woodruff records in his Journal the following. “October 12, 1847. I had a question put to me by President Young. What my opinion was concerning one of the Twelve Apostles being appointed as the President of the Church with his two counselors. I answered that a quorum like the Twelve who had been appointed by revelation, confirmed by revelation from time to time, I thought it would require a revelation to change the order of that quorum. But whatever the Lord inspires you to do in this matter, I am with you.”

In Volume VII, Church History, Page 621, is an account of the reorganization of the Second First Presidency of the Church. It occurred at the home of Orson Hyde, near Winter Quarters, Sunday, December 5, 1847. Eight members of the Quorum of the Twelve were present. The subject of the First Presidency was broached and commented on by all of the members present and all in the affirmative. After which Orson Hyde moved that Brigham Young be the President of the Church, of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints and that he nominate his two counselors, and the three form the First Presidency. Seconded by Wilford Woodruff and carried unanimously. President Young nominated Heber C. Kimball as his first counselor; seconded, and carried unanimously, President Young nominated Williard Richards as his second counselor; seconded and carried unanimously. (Woodruff’s Journal, Dec. 5, 1847.)

At the first regular General Conference held in Salt Lake City in October 1848, President Young spoke on the Priesthood. He said that God had told him that if they did not reorganize the First Presidency that they would fall.

While at St. George in 1862, conversing with some of the brethren, he pointed to Wilford Woodruff . He said that he (Woodruff) “was the first man that I felt by the spirit to speak to about organizing the First Presidency.”